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# U.S. monitoring Soviet role in Philippine insurgency

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MANILA — The United States has expanded its intelligence operations in the Philippines to monitor growing Soviet involvement in the communist insurgency, including alleged arms shipments from Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam.

Sources said up to 150 CIA agents are keeping track of at least as many Soviet agents, perhaps more, who are popping up all over the archipelago and funneling funds and arms to the insurgents.

U.S. monitors say increased activity at Cam Ranh Bay, just 700 miles across the South China Sea, suggests it has become a base for Soviet warships and intelligence-gathering vessels disguised as fishing trawlers operating around the Philippines.

The Soviets are also putting up an elaborate \$800,000 three-story building, described simply as a "staff house," that overlooks a vital Philippine military communications center, Fort Bonifacio. It is located near several large embassies, including that of the United States.

Philippine sources say it is equipped with sophisticated listening devices, has a two-story base-

ment and is situated on a prime lot that was acquired under mysterious circumstances during the Ferdinand Marcos regime. The Soviet Embassy is in another part of town.

"This issue cannot be discussed with the press," Soviet spokesman Victor Samoilenko said. "But I can assure you that ... everything is done with due permission and in accordance with Philippine laws."

In addition, the Soviets plan to open a consulate on the island of Cebu, south of Manila, and possibly one on war-torn Mindanao.

One Western observer, pointing out that few Filipinos travel to the Soviet Union, wondered, "Why on earth do they need two consulates?"

Officially, the Soviets are allowed only 35 employees at their embassy (the United States has 79) and virtually no intelligence people. But Philippine Foreign Ministry sources said at least 60 Soviets work out of the embassy and scores of agents posing as gold panners, businessmen and tourists have shown up in distant fishing villages and mountain barrios.

Most are fluent in local dialects.

Although President Corazon Aquino denied last week that she agreed to an increase in the number of U.S. intelligence agents operating here, several sources said an enlarged CIA presence has been an "open secret" in the diplomatic com-

munity for weeks.

[Sources in Washington told the San Francisco Examiner the Reagan administration has approved a \$10 million, two-year plan for increased CIA involvement in the Philippine government's anti-insurgency campaign.

[The plan, signed as a secret intelligence "finding" by President Reagan several weeks ago, includes technical intelligence assistance and covert political action. Such a "finding" allows an agency to undertake actions recommended in the document that might otherwise be prohibited.]

The Soviets have denied any involvement in the Philippine insurgency. But they were considerably embarrassed in January when communist spokesmen Javier Domingo and Ricardo Silvestre disclosed that Moscow had offered unlimited arms and money to the communist New People's Army.

They did not say if the offer was accepted.